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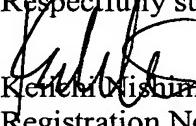
Claim 5 currently remains in the application. Claims 1-3 and 6-9 have been canceled, claim 4 has been withdrawn, and claim 5 is herein amended.

Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 over Towery over Ronay. In view at least in part of the reasons for rejection by the Examiner in Paragraph 3 of the Official Letter, claim 5 is herein amended to say that the slurry is supplied directly between the lapping plate and the target object to be polished and that the lapping plate is made of a metallic or ceramic material. Both of these additional limitations are supported by the specification and hence should be deemed enterable.

The Examiner is requested to note that the specification, as originally submitted, did not exact say in so many words that the slurry is supplied "directly". However, applicant believes that it is clear from the description of in the specification as originally submitted that this is what is actually intended. The specification says in page 5 at lines 21-24 that the use of polishing tapes or polishing pads can be dispensed with according to this invention. Persons skilled in the art are believed to understand from this description that a direct application of slurry is herein intended. This portion of the specification is herein amended to paraphrase what the statement originally present intended to say. This amendment does not introduce any new matter but provided a more solid foundation for supporting claim 5 as presently amended. In other words, both amendments in the specification and claim 5 are believed enterable.

With claim 5 thus amended, it is believed that claim 5 is now allowable because neither of the cited references relates to the use of slurry by directly applying it to the surface of a lapping plate of a solid material such as a metallic or ceramic material. The use of a soft intermediary such as a tape or a pad is now expressly obviated. It is therefore to be concluded that the present invention as limited by claim 5 is not obvious even if the cited references are considered in combination and hence that the application is allowable.

Respectfully submitted,


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